

MEMORANDUM BY THE BISHOP OF RUPERT'S LAND ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE MISSION.

1. Soon after my arrival in England, I had the opportunity of meeting the Committee of the Society, and giving them an account of the present state of their Missions in Rupert's Land. It was then understood that I would bring before the Society some proposition for a better supervision of the Missions by a subdivision of the Diocese, as well as express my views on other questions connected with the working of the Missions.

Missionary Bishoprics.

2. The fertile region in the south of Rupert's Land, including the Province of Manitoba, and extending, with some intervals of inferior land, from the Lake of the Woods, 100 miles east of the Red River, onward through the valley of the Saskatchewan to the Rocky Mountains for 1000 miles to the west, is constantly and most rapidly rising in importance. Nearly 2000 emigrants entered last year; many will enter this year; there will soon be a large population. A few years ago there was not the beginning of

a village. A town called Winnipeg is rapidly springing up, with large hotels, business shops of all kinds, several weekly newspapers, four churches, and numerous professional men. There will soon be there all the accompaniments of civilized life. I need scarcely add that the country has already changed greatly in character, and will soon change still more. This year there will be steam communication from London to Winnipeg, without a break. Next year it is expected that a railway will be competing on the very last part of the route with the steamers on the Red River. During the past winter steamers were built that will carry steam navigation this summer far on towards the Rocky Mountains, by the Assiniboine River, Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegoes, and the Saskatchewan River. There will only be two portages of a few miles each. The direct route from Canada through our own territory is being constantly improved, and surveying has been actively going on in preparation for the Great Canadian Pacific Railway, for which Canada is now about to raise a loan of eight millions sterling.

3. It is therefore quite clear that the attention of the Bishop of Rupert's Land will be so occupied in future with Manitoba and its neighbourhood, that it will be impossible for him to visit any but the nearer Missions. Indeed, so important are the prospects of emigration in the valley of the Saskatchewan, that I believe the Governor of Manitoba is to write to me to point out the importance, in the interest of the Church, of the foundation of a separate Bishopric for that District.

4. The district of country in which the Moose Missions lie has long been a separate department of the Hudson's Bay Company, called the Southern Department, under a kind of Lieutenant Governor, receiving yearly instructions from the Governor and Council of Rupert's Land. The remoteness and isolation of Moose Factory are such that the late Governor of Rupert's Land, though for years most anxious to visit it to inspect it for the Company, was never able to withdraw from Manitoba for the required time. There are now large bodies of native Christians in a number of the subordinate districts of Moose. Mr. Horden and Mr. Vincent have been able in a very remarkable manner to attend to them, being admirably seconded by four licensed native Readers, who have no salary; but there is a great need of two or three more clergymen. The Bishop of Rupert's Land has at intervals visited Moose Factory. The visitation still requires a whole summer; and on the last occasion, though the greatest economy was practised, the cost to the Society was £150. The circumstances already dwelt upon will make the recurrence of such visits difficult, if eyen possible. Even in the past they could not be regarded as satisfactory. Necessarily they were brief, hurried, partial; affording little more than a few days visit—not always that—to two or three of the chief posts where confirmations were held. Rupert's House, where there are more than 800 Nativé Christians, has had only one visit, and many of the Indians had left before that visit could be accomplished. Fort George, Great Whale River, Little Whale River, and the region bordering on the interesting race of the Esquimaux have had no visit.

In fact a proper Episcopal superintendence in such a Mission District should mean much more than has hitherto been practicable.

5. The Great Mackenzie River District of the North, including Athabasca, must contain over 800,000 square miles. The Society has in it three Missionaries and two unordained Students of St. John's College. There are also two natives of the district in the College, who may in another year be able to return. No Bishop of Rupert's Land has ever visited this district, and there is no prospect that a visit can ever take place. It would require a great part of two years for the Bishop to visit all the Missions at a time when the Indians could be met, and return again to Red River. This district can be joined to no other; it can only be visited by a Bishop residing beyond the Portage La Loche. The Roman Catholic Body has in that quarter a Bishop in the Mackenzie River district, besides a Bishop in each of the English River and Saskatchewan districts.

6. I would then ask the Society to signify to me its willingness to assist me in procuring the appointment of its Senior European Missionaries in the Moose and Mackenzie River districts—the Rev. John Horden and the Rev. William Carpenter Bompas, as Suffragans of the Bishop of Rupert's Land.

This step is equally necessary and important whether we consider the Episcopal principles of our Church and of the Society, or the certain advantage to the Society's work from

the presence and frequent visitation of a Superintendent, with the authority and sense of responsibility a Bishop would have.

Whatever the Missionary spirit of the Bishop of Rupert's Land for the time may be, there can be no question but that he will be engrossed with the cares and anxieties of the growing Colonial field where he resides, the thorough working of which must be felt to be of incalculable importance in the interest of the Church, not to speak of higher considerations.

7. I know that Archdeacon M'Lean and Mr. Horden thoroughly share my views on the necessity for the Mission-work of such subdivision. Mr. Bompas, in a letter to me this winter, urged most strongly the immediate creation of an effective superintendence in the Mackenzie River, suggesting the appointment of an Archdeacon; but I feel that an Archdeacon would not give an effective superintendence. This would be merely an honorary distinction, and would not give the necessary influence to the holder; besides, there would still be the total want of the carrying out of the Episcopal functions. Archdeacon Cowley, without any communication from me, has, I find, thus expressed himself in a letter to your Secretaries, of which he sent me a copy:—

“While the Bishop of Rupert's Land is in England, would it not be wise to take the necessary steps for the division of this unmanageably huge diocese? I think so, and heartily wish and pray that it might be done. May I suggest that all our Mission Stations north-west of Portage La Loche be placed

under the supervision of a new Bishop, in a diocese to comprise the whole of the districts beyond *the Long* Portage*? The new Bishop might be called 'Bishop of Athabasca.' I am thoroughly satisfied that such action, supposing the person chosen to fill the office competent to the requirements of such a diocese, would be calculated to promote the best interests of the Church in its tendency to reclaim the poor natives of the land, and to raise them in the scale of Christianity and civilization. The Bishop would be a strictly Missionary Bishop, and it is hardly likely that any but a man of God would accept the charge of such a laborious and self-denying post. Pray give the thought your serious consideration, and then carry it to God in prayer.

Moose District will claim attention on the same grounds, and I would hope not unheeded. May God in much mercy to this long neglected country favour the plan, and so follow it with His blessing that ere long an effective native Clergy may result."

* The Long Portage is another name for the Portage La Loche.

